

## REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed June 23, 2004, imposing Restriction and Election of Species Requirements and setting a one-month response due date of July 23, 2004.

In response to the Restriction Requirement, applicants elect the invention of Group I of claims 1-18, of which claims 1, 17 and 18 are independent.

Items 3 and 4 of the Action impose an Election of Species Requirement relative to the elected Group I, Item 4 setting forth, as examples of patentably distinct species,:

Claim 5 - stock management information;

Claim 9 - comparing management information;

Claim 17 - an asset belonging section; and

Claim 18 [with no characterization of same].

Further, the Action asserts in Item 4 that no claim is generic.

Applicants note that claim 1 is the base of claim for each of dependent claims 2-16 and hence is generic to all thereof and is "subgeneric" as relates to the totality of claims 1-19.

Claim 17 differs in form than from of claim 1 and, further, differs therefrom by not including recitations of the 35 USC § 112, ¶ 6 type. However, it is submitted that a common search would be applicable to and encompass both claims 1 and 17 and, hence, that claim 17, as well, should be included.

Likewise, claim 18, while differing in form, would be included in the same field of search as for claims 1 and 17 and thus should be included, as well.

Claims 1, 17, and 18 read on a common species, based on a system as shown in Fig. 1, using a record format in Fig. 2, and gathering management information from communication information (circulating information over the network) using a procedure for gathering communication information shown in Fig. 6. Then the gathered information (disclosed in Fig. 4) is compared with the content of storing means for storing asset management information, and when the two compared pieces of information are not the same, the content of the storing means is updated. Fig. 8 shows specific examples of such an updating operation.

Furthermore, claims 2-4 relate to an analysis procedure shown in Fig. 8.

Claim 17 relates to claim 1 in terms of technical features and, as before noted, is submitted to belong to and read on the same species as do claims 1 and 18.

Furthermore, it is submitted that Figs. 6-8 belong to the common species, because management information is gathered from communication (circulating) information by a communication information gathering procedure in Fig. 6, and software/hardware information is gathered by using the software/hardware information gathering procedure in Fig. 7, and then the gathered information (Fig. 4) is analyzed with the procedure in Fig. 8

Accordingly, applicants elect claims 1-4, 17 and 18 as reading on the system shown in Figs. 1-8.

Applicants further submit that new claims 20-24, each dependent from claim 1, new claim 25 as well as claims 26-28 dependent from claim 25, all thereof based on Figs. 1-8, and the specification at pages 17-18, relate to the elected species as follows:

Claim 20/1, claim 22/1 and claim 25/26: Steps S8-1 through S8-3 (Specification, page 17, lines 16-24) for detecting that an asset not being managed is connected to the section LAN, and giving an alarm notification to an administrator or the like.

Claim 22/1 and claim 27/25: Steps S8-4 through S8-6 (Specification, page 17, line 25 through page 18, line 9) for detecting an asset which has been transferred to another section, and automatically updating the asset management register.

Claim 23/1: Steps S8-7 through S8-10 (Specification, page 18, lines 10-19) for automatically updating the content of the registration of the asset management register on the basis of the analysis of the software/hardware gathering log of each section.

Claim 24/1 and claim 28/25: Steps S8-11 (Specification, page 18, line 23 to page 19, line 4) for checking the licenses, when it is determined that the software asset is one being managed.

Accordingly, these new claims 20-28 are listed as reading on the elected specie and are properly presented for examination at this time.

No new matter is presented in the foregoing new claims and accordingly approval and entry of same are respectfully requested.

**CONCLUSION**

Favorable examination is respectfully requested.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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